

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 QUITO 03318 162303Z
ACTION HA-05

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 L-03 H-01 /020 W
-----118540 181106Z /11

R 162254Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8264
INFO AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 3318

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SRUM, EC, PINT
SUBJECT: CONGRESSIONAL INQUIRY: MANUEL ANTON VELEZ

REF: STATE 124029

BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

1. MANUEL ANTON (VELEZ IS MATRONYMIC) IS CURRENTLY SERVING A TWO YEAR SENTENCE FOR LEADING THE MAY, 1977, TEACHERS' STRIKE CARRIED OUT BY THE NATIONAL TEACHERS' UNION (UNE). THE STRIKE WAS DECLARED ILLEGAL BY THE GOE; UNE WAS FORMALLY ABOLISHED AND ANTON BEGAN HIS SENTENCE IN AUGUST 1977.

2. ANTON AND JULIO AYALA, THE OTHER UNE PRINCIPAL ARRESTED (AND ALSO SERVING TWO YEARS), ARE PRESENTLY HELD IN THE GUAYAQUIL PENITENTIARY. AYALA WAS VISITED MAY 11 BY TONY DIBLASI, A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS (AFT) WHO IS IN ECUADOR WORKING TO HELP REBUILD A VIABLE TEACHERS' UNION. DIBLASI REPORTED TO POL/LABOFF MAY 16 THAT HE FOUND AYALA IN GOOD SPIRITS AND WELL-TREATED. ANTON, ON THE OTHER HAND, REFUSED TO SEE DIBLASI.

3. SINCE THE IMPRISONMENT OF AYALA AND ANTON THERE HAVE BEEN NUMEROUS UNFOUNDED RUMORS ABOUT THEIR EARLY RELEASE. THESE WERE REVIVED UPON THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY
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OF THE UNSUCCEFFFUL STRIKE ON MAY 1.

4. FROM TIME TO TIME THERE APPEAR CALLS IN THE PRESS FOR THE RELEASE OF THE TWO TEACHER LEADERS. WHEN THE GOE REPONDS MERELY RESTATES THAT BOTHMEN WERE SENTENCED UNDER LEGAL PROCEDURES FOR ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES. THAT IS TRUE, SO FAR AS IT GOES. BOTH WERE SENTENCED UNDER PRO-

CEDURES ESTABLISHED AFTER THE BEGINNING OF THEIR STRIKE WHICH DID NOT PROVIDE FOR AN INDEPENDENT DETERMINATION OF GUILT; THE POLICE OFFICIAL BRINGING THE CHARGES ALSO PASSED SENTENCE. END LIMITED OFFICIAL USE.

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5. FYI: MOST LABOR LEADERS HERE CONCEDE THAT THE TEACHERS' STRIKE WAS PROBABLY ILLEGAL UNDER THE TERMS OF THE ECUADOREAN LABOR CODE. UNE REPRESENTATIVES IN GUAYAQUIL OFFERED TWO POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS FOR ANTON'S REFUSAL TO SEE DIBLASI: ONE, ANTON SUFFERS SERIOUS PERIODIC DEPRESSION ABOUT HIS IMPRISONMENT; AND TWO, THEY IDENTIFIED HIM AS A MEMBER OF THE CUBA-LINE ECUADOREAN REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST PARTY (PSRE) (WHICH IS HOSTILE TO THE US).
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